

# Founder of the Animal Church Explains All About It

Intended to Act as a Check on Too Autocratic Human Tendencies, Says Royal Dixon

AMONG the "isms" and "osms" that wander in and out of Manhattan every now and then something stirs interest through sheer oddity. Such a movement is Royal Dixon's campaign for the animal kingdom.

As founder and leader of the First Church for Animal Rights Mr. Dixon is a pioneer in the field—the first man to come boldly out and spread the animal religion gospel without reservations. At present his activities do not go much further than a series of Sunday afternoon meetings held at the Astor Hotel. But there is much more to the plan.

Eventually there is to be a real church, with an animal bible, animal prayers and the animal creed. There is even to be a Sunday school for the youngsters and a foreign missionary service—all devoted to creating a better spirit between mankind and the animal kingdom.

## Snubbing the Animal

The whole idea was founded, so far as can be made out, on the principle that human beings have adopted entirely too autocratic a pose toward the lower animals. Take the average man—how much of a friendly feeling does he have toward the housefly? How readily does he chum in with the garter snake? How often does he try to penetrate the mystery behind the mosquito?

A careful review of the situation reveals some appalling statistics. So far as animal religion is concerned the great majority have remained out and out heathens. But it really isn't their fault. For the most part animal religion has been hiding in the far recesses.

When Mr. Dixon conceived his idea of fair play for the animals he couldn't find even the remnants of an adequate animal religion. So he went out and founded one of his own. Then it followed that he should have a church to house his new religion. Gradually the idea grew until there dawned full plans for the new church and the new religion.

The cardinal principle of the new faith is best summed up in the simple declarative:

"Every living creature has the

inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

At first glance this may be regarded as a fairly lenient proposition. It is the interpretation of the clause that shatters the very foundations of modern society. In its broader sense "every living creature" can be held to include anything from a South African hoptoad to a New Jersey mosquito, which, even in these days of mammoth accomplishments, is considerable undertaking.

## Angles to Consider

While there may be those who have neither objection nor prejudice against assuming friendly relations with the common or garden variety of garter snake, many a housekeeper, whose disposition is otherwise above reproach, will balk at the purely hypothetical suggestion of harboring anything but ill will toward the invading fly. Certainly there are many angles to consider before subscribing too liberally to the new faith.

With this in mind Mr. Dixon was referred to, partly for confirmation and partly for fresh evidence. With only garbled accounts of his activities his interviewer did not have much to go on. In fact, he was absolutely as untutored in the animal religion as the next man.

Mr. Dixon was most agreeable, eager to make his questioner understand, patient with ignorance in the matter, and always eloquent in his appeal for the poor dumb creatures who have had so few champions in the forward march of civilization.

Mainly it was desired to ascertain if he believed, without qualifications, in the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" propaganda. Probably it was a foolish question to open an interview, but he didn't seem to mind.

"Of course I do," he said.

## Swat the Fly

"But how do you stand on the 'swat-the-fly' movement?" was asked, for no other reason than to watch him crumble and fall at the first shot.

"Well," he said, giving the question more thought than it really deserved, "I suppose I stand in



about the same position that you do."

It was explained, as briefly as was commensurate with dignity, that his questioner had been brought up in the old-fashioned school, having been taught that to exterminate the fly is not only the duty of a self-respecting citizen but a privilege and a pleasure. In fact, in early youth Mr. Dixon's questioner had been known to accept a slight stipend for the killing of flies—on the hoof, so to speak. As far as can be remembered, the prevailing scale of prices ran: One cent for every ten flies brought down in the living room, 1 cent for every twenty in the dining room and 1 cent for every thirty in the kitchen. While this may seem but slight reward for so great an individual initiative, it is only fair to add that when the hunting season within the house fell off the scheme of opening the doors and windows to induce a fresh crop of flies into the interior was not considered unsportsmanlike.

But still the founder of the animal religion nodded his head and insisted that he was in accord with any sane treatment of the fly menace.

ROYAL DIXON practices what he preaches. Here he is seen conducting a juvenile class in biblical history, with the police dog acting as monitor. Dogs take to the Ten Commandments more rapidly than any other animal, according to Mr. Dixon's experience

## The Buzzing Mosquito

"And how do you stand on mosquitoes?" was asked. "Please, we mean this seriously. If you woke up in the middle of the night and found a mosquito buzzing around your left ear what would be your natural reaction?"

"Thou shalt not kill," he quoted verbatim from the Bible.

"But just what would be your attitude?"

He evaded the question by a neat thrust.

"Have you," he asked, "or any of your friends ever penetrated the mystery behind the mosquito?"

The answer was "No."

"Then don't talk to me about killing mosquitoes until you are more conversant with the subject."

"How do you reconcile your theories of the 'inalienable right of every living creature' with this mildly passive treatment of the fly and the mosquito?"

Mr. Dixon's manner changed immediately. He asked for "fair play."

"I can answer your question. Of course, I can. But it will take me at least ten thousand words to do the subject any justice whatsoever. If you can guarantee me that much space I shall be glad to make myself clear."

Protest was made. Didn't he have a nice handy résumé of the situation for convenient use, which would explain how a person could swat flies

and still be eligible for membership in the First Church for Animal Rights?

"No," he said, "I must have the ten thousand words."

And there the matter hung.

## Movement Is Conservative

But Mr. Dixon was anxious to go on and explain other points of the new religion. He insisted that he and his associates were being misjudged both by the press and the public—that they were being lined up with "radical" elements.

"We are conservatives," he said.

"For the present our main idea is to preach and teach the oneness of life and awaken the humane consciousness. We wish to develop the character of youth through humane education, to train and send forth humane workers, to act as spiritual fountainhead and spokesman of humane organizations and animal societies and give a better understanding of their work and needs to the public."

Mr. Dixon was asked how the First Church for Animal Rights would differ in its activity from the

Members Must Have Kindly Feelings for All Things, Though Swat-the-Fly Movement Suffers

even give an estimate, but we as an organization are most assuredly not going in for anything radical.

"Personally, I do not eat meat, nor fish. But I have eaten both."

From here the discussion lapsed into generalities, and did not get back to the particular until an argument arose over whether or not the cow has a conscience.

Mr. Dixon was positive in the affirmative. He related an experience which seemed to prove that one particular cow, at least, had a conscience. But he admitted that there were good cows and bad cows. His suggestion was that most of the badness of the average cow could be attributed to neglected training. A properly brought-up cow should follow her master to the pasture in the morning without any urging. There should be no need of "driving" cows.

## No Happy Hunting Ground

Mr. Dixon exploded completely the theory of the happy hunting ground as a hereafter for good dogs.

"Heaven is full of animals," he said. "There is constant mention of that fact in the Bible."

"Then," was suggested, "animals must have souls."

"Of course they have. Naturally you cannot compare the soul of a man to the soul of an animal, any more than you can compare the culture of a college-bred man to the culture of a Fiji Islander. But souls of some sort they certainly have."

"Comparisons can be so unfair. I have seen people up at the zoological park pass a cage that held an old decrepit ape and laugh at the absurdity of comparing man to the ape. And yet I might go to Africa and bring back a fine stalwart type of ape, and then go down on the lower East Side and pick out a stoop-shouldered old man. Placing these two side by side would make quite a different comparison."

Mr. Dixon was asked how the First Church for Animal Rights would differ in its activity from the

animal societies already in the field.

## Pink Tea Parties

"Most of these animal societies of to-day meet once a month during seven or eight months of the year. Their meetings are apt to take the form of pink teas, where nicely gowned ladies and correctly attired men gather to discuss uplifting the animal."

"Our own program is quite different. We will have regular weekly services, and possibly daily meetings as well. Please remember that we emphatically are not faddists."

For the present the new animal religion is not intended to take the place of any other religious faith. Membership in the First Church for Animal Rights is not calculated to conflict with other religious affiliations. The animal bible which is to serve as the textbook of the new religion, has not as yet been completed. Mr. Dixon has been working over the manuscript for several years. It will be made up of passages from the Bible referring to animals, with editorial comment by Mr. Dixon.

In projecting his campaign for the animal kingdom Mr. Dixon is not entering a new field. He is the author of several nature books, The Human Side of Birds, The Human Side of Trees, The Human Side of Plants, Forest Friends and others.

For several years Mr. Dixon has been a lecturer for the Board of Education of New York City, and during the war he served as a special lecturer to the American Expeditionary Forces in France under the auspices of the Y. M. C. A. At various times he has filled pulpits in metropolitan churches to give his nature talks.

## On the Stage

Mr. Dixon began his career as a child actor and dancer as the protégé of Adele Fox. His last public appearance as an actor was at the Iroquois Theater, in Chicago, in 1903. Since that time he has devoted himself to writing and lecturing.

In offering this new phase of his work Mr. Dixon is inspired by the thought that a little more humane treatment of animals may bring them closer to being humans.

# Motoring in Vivid Morocco Is a Matter of Startling Contrasts

IT IS said to be difficult to find anything new under the sun, and that all "new" things are merely old things, with a different dress. In all humility, but with all the arrogance of the tourist, I am convinced that motoring in Morocco is new, says a correspondent of The London Times. It may be old to-morrow, an old story not worth the telling; but it is very new to-day.

It is an affair of the most vivid contrasts. The motorist wandering about between Taza in the east and Mogador in the south can confidently expect anything to turn up which is not in the guidebooks and which nobody has mentioned to him as a likely contingency.

He will drive over most excellent roads on one day; on the next will be fording streams, getting sunk in morasses of wet sand, and rolling and pitching over potholes and ruts of pantomime proportions, and on the same day he may be once more raising a cloud of red dust at forty miles an hour over a national road. Neither guidebooks nor personal information are of much use, and the only way to find out the truth about a road is to drive over it one's self.

## Roads Impassable

The weather may do anything unexpected, with the caprice of an English spring. This is called the "Season of the Rains," and I am quite willing to accept the term. It seems to be suitable. At the same time one will be told that it seldom rains at this time of the year, but that it may do so. In any case it will always rain torrentially when one of the weatherwise has announced a dry spell. And when it rains in Morocco life on the road becomes a sheer impossibility. East of Meknes, for example, two days' rain will render the roads practically impassable, while one day's sunshine will turn them from rivers and lakes of hopeless mud into properly conducted highways again. But do not count upon the next day's sunshine.

The temperature is another factor in life on the road which is apt to complicate things. One has to remember that the further south one goes the colder it will be. Marrakech I shall always remember as one of the coldest places I have ever known. For three hours in the middle of the day a blazing sun will make things quite pleasant, but during the remaining twenty-one hours

one yearns for fur coats. The breath from the Atlas snow peaks reminds one of that tiny wind of the Spaniards, which will scarcely stir a candle flame, yet kill a man in an hour. It is impossible to wear too many clothes.

## Moorish Inns

Then the unexpected is always turning up in one's search for hotels. You may spend one night in a "pal-

ace" establishment, where there are not only bells and people to answer when you ring them, but baths which you can have filled with real hot water. Also the electric light generally works. The next day you camp in a stark echoing stone bungalow, where the water supply is maintained entirely by converted kerosene tins, laboriously carried to and from a spring outside by a small boy; where yellow dips take the place

of electric light and the evening meal is, as Rupert Brooke said, "many tasting."

You never know your luck with Moorish inns, except in one respect—you always will find a smiling welcome, and, however rude the fare and the accommodation, the proprietor and his staff will do their cheerful best to make things pleasant for you. You only need a little philosophy. Morocco is a country where great

things will be done in time, but where you must sometimes expect very little indeed. After all, what does it matter? One does not bring a motor car to a land which has only just joined the company of countries on one's visiting list and hope to find it full of international luxuries.

The only real drawbacks, so far as my experience goes, are the uncertainty of petrol supplies and the

shocking quality of the stuff when you get it.

## Indifferent to Motors

I said that motoring in Morocco was a new thing, but to judge by the utter nonchalance of every living thing in the country, down to the youngest camel in a caravan, you would suppose that motor cars had been invented there. Everybody uses them; nobody pays the smallest

attention to them. If you are driving alone, or have a seat to spare, you will certainly be hailed by a pedestrian and asked to give him a lift along the road, but he will be no joy rider. He will ask for a lift either because he is tired or late for an appointment, not for the sake of motoring. It took us in Europe about fifteen years to reach this practical, if rather dull, attitude; it has taken the Moor about five.

Still, in face of the glaring fact that the roads are alive with motor cars of every kind, that practically all human transport is by motor, that the Transatlantic Company runs a regular service of motor charabancs between Casablanca and Algiers and has started hotels all along the route to house the petrol caravans—still, I say, motoring in Morocco has not yet lost the bloom of youth. All sorts of very new and medieval adventures may befall you on the long stretch from the Atlantic at Rabat to the Algerian frontier at Oudja. You may not drive at night, for example. Notices are up in the postoffices to the effect that the colonel commanding that particular post (after Fez every place on the map is virtually a military outpost) will "invite" those drivers who find themselves on the road after sundown to pass the night in the seclusion of his post—an invitation which may be regarded as royal rather than republican. This, the notice goes on to point out, is necessary if "vexatious incidents" are to be avoided.

## Picture Book Stuff

Then you have in eastern Morocco the beautiful person in a scarlet or blue cloak, a huge white turban, with a rifle slung across his back, who rides his horse as if the two of them had been born as one. He belongs to the picture books of youth, but he is here in scores, and he helps you not only by keeping away brigands and other fabulous monsters, but by doing some extremely skillful sheep-shearing when you are held up by flocks. He shouts, he gallops furiously around you and the amazed muttons, he performs prodigies of horsemanship—why is the Moorish road patrol not a film star? He is much better than any bronco buster that ever rehearsed at Los Angeles—he smiles all over you like a sunrise—and then races the car, two of him, as a rule, for a mile or more, just because life is—such fun.

Motoring may not be such a new game to the dweller in Morocco, although even he cannot have played at it properly for much more than half a dozen years, but it is really a new one to the visitor from across the sea who does not grumble at an avoidable discomfort, who likes people rather than things, and, above all, who likes them picturesque, kindly and smiling. Morocco is the land of smiles, the place where scowls are unknown.

# The Greatest Day

(Continued from preceding page)

taken her place, lying moaning against the table. Her son, with trembling fingers, gave her brandy. Samuel Lyle watched them, frowning. Finally Mrs. Farson regained sufficient composure to satisfy him.

"Madam," he said, "you confess without reservation?"

Mrs. Farson's lips moved, but if she spoke her words were inaudible. George Farson, a sorry spectacle, stood by the window, the perspiration rolling down his face. His hand gripped a curtain and his body swayed back and forth weakly.

"Do you confess, madam, that you have your jewels in your possession; that in making your affidavit in connection with your proof of loss you committed perjury?"

Mrs. Farson's body trembled as she comprehended the awful meaning of the word.

"Speak. Do not keep us waiting."

George Farson tottered across the room like a drunken man. His arms waved before him, his fingers opened and shut like a huge bird's claws, and he made his way toward Mr. Lyle with murder in his eyes. Samuel Lyle waited for him and motioned the others away, and when the time came his long arm shot out and his great hairy hand grasped Farson's coat where the V met over his chest, and shook him as though he were a rag, and threw him into a chair. Then with a glance at the prostrate figure, he turned again to Mrs. Farson.

"Well, Mrs. Farson, have you committed perjury and sundry other crimes?"

They could just hear her hissing:

"We have no interest in your

crimes. The fact is the thing: read this carefully, please." He took a paper from his pocket. "It is a release of all claim against the insurance company. It states nothing of your attempted fraud. Mr. Worthington will attest your signature. Will you read it, or shall I read it to you?"

George Farson, in the chair, moved, and Mr. Lyle nodded to Higgins.

"Be still, you," said Higgins. The mother's eyes were on her son.

"Listen to me," said Mr. Lyle, and read. Then: "Will you sign?" Mr. Lyle took a book from the table and placed the paper on it. He took a pen from his pocket and stood beside the woman. She took the pen and signed, blindly, every bit of courage, pride and hope gone from her. Then Worthington did his part.

"We are through, gentlemen," Mr. Lyle said. "I imagine, madam, that you and your son will not remain long in Alden. Good afternoon."

Samuel Lyle and Paul Waters went into Orchard Street.

"Damn poorly done," Mr. Lyle muttered. "I am ashamed of myself. However, I shall expect your check to-morrow morning for \$16,375.32 exactly, and, remember, you are dining with me to-night at quarter after seven. Be prompt. I do not like to be kept waiting."

"I'll be there. Don't worry," Paul cried, "but please tell me how you found out about?"

Mr. Lyle made a gesture of disgust. "Bah! Any fool could have guessed the probability and then confirmed it easily enough. I'm ashamed of Higgins. Don't forget the check; business is rotten, and I need ready cash." And he strode away, leaving Paul staring after

him. He did not suspect that Mr. Lyle was chuckling inside.

At quarter after seven, promptly, Paul took off his hat and coat and walked into Mr. Lyle's parlor. There was no one there, but he heard a voice and he went toward the door that led to the library. Samuel Lyle saw him, but paid no attention to him and kept on speaking to a great high-backed, deep leather chair the back of which was toward Paul. The huge man was making a speech, slowly and eloquently; his whole mind was intent upon it, his eyes bored into the chair. Paul heard the words:

"—capacity for inflicting torture has been cultivated in the highest of all animals, developed into a fine science. Man himself has no such power or skill. The hand that soothes, the eye that sends forth signs of purity and sweetness and gentleness, go arm in arm with a mind which takes fiendish delight in the writhing of the agonized victim of its machinations."

"Bless my soul, if there isn't little Paul Waters! Where do you suppose he came from? I'll leave him to take care of you. Dinner is at eight," and as he passed Paul he whispered: "She knows nothing of what happened this afternoon. I haven't breathed a word of it, on your account."

Paul stared at the high-backed leather chair.

"Miss Wesson—Mr. Paul Waters," and Samuel Lyle disappeared.

Paul walked around the high-backed leather chair. Polly Wesson, who was no midget, was almost lost in it.

"Did you hear what Mr. Lyle was saying about me?" she asked.

Paul nodded.

"Am I like that?"

Paul nodded and then smiled.

"Isn't he a funny old man?" said Polly.

"Polly, I can't talk to you way down there; come up." He offered her his hand to help her, and she took it.

"He told me dinner was at 7 o'clock and not to keep him waiting," she said.

"He told me dinner was at 7:15 o'clock and not to keep him waiting."

"I wonder what he meant?"

"I wonder."

Polly, not quite realizing what she was doing, held out her other hand too, and Paul, drawing her upward, held them both.

"Polly!"

"All right, Paul, I'll be good." She was very good, and during the half hour that followed she admitted that she would have been good to Paul long before if he hadn't made her furious by thinking that she could even like George Farson, when Paul ought to have been sure that she had loved him ever since she was a little girl. She said that she hoped the lesson would do him good, but Paul wasn't worrying about lessons or anything else.

A little before 8 o'clock a voice came from the doorway: "Well, well, well! Bless my soul!" They spun around and saw Mr. Lyle beaming upon them. There was great joy in his voice. "Hm—m," he muttered. "So! Now let me see, what did I do with it, what did I do with it? Oh, yes, I remember. Paul, will you please look in the dictionary, the large book on the table, and tell me the meaning of 'mastership'? Quickly, please!"

Paul, laughing and wondering what joke Samuel Lyle was playing now, reached for the book. It opened

at a place marked by a folded paper. Paul read: "Mastership, the state or office of a master; mastery; dominion; superior skill; superiority. An ironical title of respect."

"An ironical title of respect," Mr. Lyle mused. "A dangerous word, Miss Polly. Now, on the opposite page, what word catches your eye, Paul?"

"Match."

"Match, to be sure. Most appropriate. And between 'mastership' and 'match' what have you?"

"Masteriff—mastodon—mat—"

"Blind! There in your hand. Suppose you present that paper to Miss Wesson, and while she reads it tell me what word comes before 'mastership' in the dictionary."

"Masterpiece."

"I take that word unto myself. Didn't I tell you that to-day would be the greatest day of my life? I've never had such a thrill before. You have been trying to do for years what I've done for you in!" He stopped and laughed at Paul; he was as happy as a boy.

Polly interrupted them. She had been trying to decipher the document that had lain between the leaves of the dictionary.

"What is this?" she asked. "I don't understand."

"My dear young lady," Mr. Lyle said, "that is the deed of the very pretty little brick house in Stockton which you have admired for so long, the house in which you told me you could live happily with almost any man if he wasn't too homely. The house is yours. Is the man too homely?"

Polly Wesson, bewildered, looked from Paul to Samuel Lyle.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "I—I—it can't be—it!"

"The lease of the present tenant

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